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C. K. JONES.

SUGGESTIONS FOR, AND ADVANTAGES OF, A PAN-AMERICAN BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION

Because of its general interest, this paper, which was sent to the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress by Señor Carlos Silva Cruz, Director of the Biblioteca Nacional at Santiago de Chile, is presented here in full. It has been taken from a pamphlet entitled *La "Asociación Bibliográfica Pan-Americana" por menos de la Unión Pan-Americana de Bibliotecas Nacionales* (Santiago de Chile, Imprenta Universitaria, 1915). The English translation appearing here is, with some few changes, that made by "the eminent anthropologist Mr. Richard E. Latham, of Santiago de Chile."

Historical students all agree as to the necessity for greater bibliographical facilities in a study of Hispanic America. Señor Silva Cruz touches upon a very vital matter, and it is very clear that some coöperative effort in which all the countries in the Americas were to have a share, would be productive of good results. Considerable might be done by the National Libraries and the Universities of each country, each

working in harmony with all the others. The Library of Congress of the United States has produced some notable bibliographical works already as has also the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The annual Griffin bibliography might also serve as a basis for work along similar line in other countries. As pointed out in the paper given below, current material of the various countries should be more quickly brought to the attention of the reading and student world. The ignorance of Americans, North or South, regarding the countries of the western hemisphere, it is patent, needs to be dispelled. Happily various organizations are working toward that end.

I

The difficulties of communication between the different countries of America have been, during the whole of the nineteenth century, as Chinese walls, that isolated them one from the others in everything related to spiritual life. Their fountains of inspiration were beyond the seas. Their sources of information in everything intellectual, especially those of the Latin countries, were principally in Spain and France, more in France than in Spain.

The greater part of the educated persons in Chile that know anything of the United States, of its mind, habits, psychology, etc., know it only through European books, that is to say through a European medium. The descriptions, nearly always fantastical, and the rapid and superficial impressions of those tourists that visit us from the other side of the Atlantic, are in general the spectacles through which the peoples of America see each other.

Although latterly the communications have been greatly facilitated by means of international railways and new maritime routes, these Chinese walls have still been solidly maintained, kept from falling on the one hand by tradition and habit, and on the other by the want of mutual permanent and organized bibliographic information, the want of organized Pan-American distribution of books, and the want of direct and intimate relations between the authors, editors, booksellers, and public libraries of the different countries of America.

Any effort made to remedy this state of affairs would be a great Pan-American work, because any commercial and political drawing together, in order to be solid and of mutual benefit, requires, as a previous condition, an intellectual approximation, and this is only obtained by mutual knowledge and understanding.

The efforts in favor of this mutual knowing of each other, realized by travelers, lecturers, interchange of professors, and even by International Congresses, although very deserving and efficacious at the given moment, are nevertheless not sufficient, as they are wanting in continuity. The only permanent work, slow but sure, is that which is carried out by publishing organs, such as books, periodicals, reviews, etc., which are the constant expounders of the mind and activity of each country. These would carry from day to day, from one end of the continent to the other, the daily vibrations of the thoughts and sentiments of the people who inhabit them; and may make of *Pan-Americanism* not only a simple expression but also a living reality.

Unfortunately, it is an undeniable fact that, in intellectual things, we American countries are even more distant, one from the other, than in all other classes of activity.

This fact, which is known by all those in America who read, study, or observe the life of the continent, is confirmed mathematically by statistical figures.

The total number of publications consulted in the central reading room of the Chilean National Library, during 1912 (the first year in which the statistics were kept by nationalities) was 47,311, including books, pamphlets, reviews, and periodicals.

Divided into nationalities, this total gives 20,618 for national literature and 26,693 for that of foreign countries; and of the latter 11,366 for French literature; 9,160 for Spanish; and only 1,396 for all the American countries combined.

That is to say that, of the foreign works read by the public of Santiago in their principal Library, during the year, 43 per cent were French, 34 per cent Spanish, and only 5 per cent American.

Of every 100 readers, only five asked for books that originated in American countries; or, in other terms, only one American book was read for 7 Spanish and 8 French.

In the following years the statistical figures offer analogous results.

In 1913 the total consultations in the central reading room were 68,612, of which 33,034 were Chilean printed matter and 35,578 foreign. Of the latter, 15,191 were French publications, 12,166 Spanish, and 2,305 American. Accordingly, French literature was represented by 42 per cent of the total of foreign printed matter read, the Spanish by 34 per cent and the American by 6 per cent or one American publication for each 6 Spanish and 7 French.

In 1914 the total was 126,704 publications, of which 52,356 were Chilean and 73,348 foreign. French literature was represented by 28,910, or 36 per cent of the foreign total, Spanish by 23,820 or 31 per cent, and American by 7,781 or 10 per cent; which signifies one American book for each 3 Spanish or 4 French.

The slight reaction noted in 1914 was doubtless owing to the organised propaganda carried out by the National Library, whose Section of Information and *Revista de Bibliografía* have lately done all that was possible to make known amongst us American literatures, in the small measure that such a vast work could be carried out by the isolated efforts of one library.

These figures are a sure enough index of the attention which the ordinary reader in Chile pays to the intellectual productions of each one of the foreign countries; reveals his knowledge of the divers literatures; and shows the present state of his relations with the different centres of mental production.

Is this lamentable fact, proved by the eloquence of numbers, as regards Chile, by the National Library, common to the other countries of America?

Everything leads us to believe so because it is derived from atavistic educational causes, from deep-rooted secular traditions which make American countries look, in a cultural way, as in commercial and financial things, much more towards the nations of Europe than to their neighbors of the same continent.

It is desirable, nevertheless, not only in order to prove the exactness of this fact but also to appreciate its extent and obtain knowledge of its details, that all the other public libraries of America should keep similar statistics, and that their results should be published or mutually made known by means of an Association, such as farther on I propose.

It is also desirable that an investigation should be made among booksellers, in order to know the tendency of the vast reading public that do not make use of public libraries but buy the books they read. This investigation should be in charge of the National Library of each country.

Bibliographical investigations such as those proposed are current in some countries. Some time ago the Japanese Legation in Chile undertook such an one by request of the Ministry of Public Instruction of the Empire; and in America they are absolutely necessary if we wish

to fathom with any exactitude the greater or lesser degree of intellectual consolidation that unites the peoples of the continent.

Besides these facts, proved by statistics, there are others whose evident existence is an axiom to all those in America who occupy themselves with intellectual matters.

If an *author*, in any of the cities of the United States, publishes a work whose theme is a little more than merely local, he knows that it will be easy for him to obtain its circulation throughout the country and to count on its sale in the forty-eight states of the Union and also in the Colonies, that is to say throughout an area in which live one hundred million individuals that speak the language in which the work is written: English.

But if in one of the "Latin-American" cities an author brings forth a work of importance and of general interest, he, on the contrary, knows that it will be materially impossible to obtain its ample circulation outside of his own country, which is the only part where he can count on a sale; in other words, a territory inhabited by two, four or six million persons, at the utmost.

Under the same conditions of importance and interest of the publication, if the first can produce an edition of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand copies, the second can scarcely edit two or three thousand.

Nevertheless, the Latin-American countries of the same or similar speech (Spanish or Portuguese) occupy an area inhabited by seventy million individuals—an area which, with an efficient organization, could give the authors a sufficient market to produce an edition of from fifteen to twenty thousand, instead of two or three.

Let us put ourselves, for the moment, in the case of the *investigator*. How many difficulties, how many troubles has he to go through to find out what has been published in his own and other countries of the continent on the subject of his researches!

Special bibliographies, even of recent works, are entirely wanting or, if they exist, it is impossible to obtain them at a given moment. One does not even know of whom to obtain them.

Even the official documentation—on matters of legislation, jurisprudence, organization, and actual work of the public institutions, statistics and administrative, commercial, or industrial movement—is extremely scarce in each country, in regards to the rest, not excluding the immediate neighbors.

In general it may be said that the only practical means of obtaining documents for any study related to the various countries of America is, under the present state of things, a personal trip through such countries; a case which is hardly ever feasible for the investigator.

What I have said respecting *authors* and *investigators* will also hold good as regards *the general reader*, who, in our countries, has every kind of facility for obtaining European books, even the most insignificant, but finds all kinds of difficulties when he desires to obtain or read even the most important of American books or publications.

I can affirm, through personal knowledge, after innumerable conversations and with the experience obtained in the post which I occupy in the National Library, that, in Chile, the scientific, literary, and artistic movement of the Argentine Republic (a country with which we have a common boundary of 2,400 miles) is far less known than that of any European country of some importance.

With identical personal experience I can affirm the same thing regarding the knowledge which educated persons in Chile have of North American science, literature, or art.

But this ignorance is mutual and well repaid. This I can also personally affirm, by experience acquired in Buenos Aires during the Scientific Congress of 1910, and in the United States, during the Pan-American Exhibition held at Buffalo, where, for almost all the visitors to our building, it was a great surprise that there were other exhibits besides minerals and saltpetre, such as paintings, sculpture, and books.

I am not afraid of being mistaken if I say that the greater part of the delegates to this Congress can testify to a similar experience and conviction.

II

This situation requires a quick and active remedy, if we sincerely desire to form a *Pan-American spirit and sentiment*, the only solid and enduring basis for the linking together of the continent. And the institutions that, in my opinion, are most fitted to make an efficient effort in this respect are the National Libraries of the different countries of America, united in a common action and a permanent organization.

The National Library of each American Republic, by virtue of tradition and of legal dispositions relating to printed matter and copy-

right, is the compulsory deposit of all the literary production of the country; day by day all the manifestations of national activity gradually fill its cases, and it can thus become the ablest exponent and the best agent in making known this activity to other countries, by simply reflecting outwardly what is daily archived in its interior.

Our own Library, for instance, contains in its Section of Manuscripts nearly all the historical documents of the country that refer to the colonial epoch, to the period of emancipation, and to a great part of its independent life; many of the best known of our national investigators and writers have donated to it all their private documents; in the section of Chilean Publications, are to be found all the books and papers printed in the country, and the complete collection of all the newspapers, periodicals, and reviews, from the first number of each one; in its "Legal deposit" and in its "Register of artistic and literary possessions", are received day by day not only these books, pamphlets and periodical publications, but also the music printed in the country, the maps, plans, and reproductions of painting, sculpture, and other works of art; by virtue of the same legal dispositions and of the necessity of increasing its collections, it is in constant relations with the booksellers, editors, and printers of the whole Republic, and its exchange list places it in contact with the most important foreign universities and libraries; its *Revista de Bibliografía* and its "Information Section" put it in contact with the authors, students, and booklovers. It is also the home of numerous academies, and literary, scientific, and artistic societies; in its halls are constantly to be found those occupied in research work; here also are held numerous courses of foreign languages, and in the Central Salon hardly a day passes without public lectures on the most varied themes, in which the most eminent literary men, artists, professional men, scientists, writers, and historians take active part.

These circumstances convert the Chilean National Library into a cultural centre which reflects all the intellectual activity of the country; and this makes it especially fit to make known this activity to other countries of the continent, and also theirs in Chile.

Why should not this task be fulfilled? Why can it not be carried out by other National Libraries, whose facilities and activities are surely not inferior to ours?

Common action becomes imperious, and would make fruitful many efforts which, being isolated, are sterile. Our *Revista de Bibliografía Chilena y Extranjera*, for instance, started with the general aim of

giving foreign bibliographical information, but having principally in view mutual Pan-American information, has only been able to fulfill this primordial purpose in an imperfect manner, precisely on account of the want of a continental bibliographical organization. Its "American Section" should be the most complete; but is, however, much poorer than the European one, because of the almost insurmountable difficulties which it encounters in finding out from one month to another what has been published in America.

The resolution of the National Libraries of all the American countries to combine in a "Pan-American Bibliographical Union", correctly organized on a practical and expeditious basis, would produce, in intellectual grounds, similar advantages to those brought about in the commercial and political field by the "Pan-American Union", of Washington.

It would be necessary above all to create, in the National Library of each one of the countries of the continent, a "Central Bureau or Office of Pan-American Bibliographical Information".

This Office would supply to the other libraries of the country, to its universities, colleges, administrative offices, and to the public in general, all the data that were solicited respecting the history, geography, political organization, statistics, and the literary, scientific, or artistic production of any of the other countries of America.

To be able to supply these data, each "Central Office of Pan-American Bibliographical Information" should possess a complete fund of adequate documentation, classified and catalogued in such a manner as to make its consultation quick and easy.

The systems of classification and cataloguing should be uniform in all the offices, so that information may be interchangeable. The choice of these systems would naturally be a matter of common agreement; but, if I may be permitted, I should like to recommend the cataloguing by means of cards placed in double order—alphabetical and matter treated; in accordance with the decimal classification adopted by the Bibliographical Congress of Brussels; a system used with excellent results in our Library, from the time when, according to a vote of the first Pan-American Scientific Congress, it was adopted in Chile, by a decree of the Minister of Public Instruction, Jorge Huneeus G.

How could each National Library obtain the documentation necessary for its Office of Pan-American Bibliographical Information? By means of the other National Libraries which would form part of

the Union. Each one of them would be required to supply to all the others the documentation referring to its own country; for which purpose, each Government would dictate the necessary regulations. This interchange, in the charge of special offices, such as the National Libraries, would always result much more constant and efficacious than the direct exchange from one Government to another, as is established in some treaties.

Besides this, each office would have charge of the formation and opportune remittance of complete monthly bibliographies of its respective country, if possible printed, or at any rate in shorthand or typewritten copies. There should be included in these bibliographies:

1. A complete review of all the books and pamphlets published during the month, including the index and other information necessary to form a general idea of their contents and importance.

2. The summaries of the reviews published during the same period, also with the indispensable notes.

3. A list of such articles as are of permanent value or of Pan-American importance, published in the periodicals, and

4. A review of the new music published or performed, of the dramatic productions brought out, and the principal works of art exhibited.

These monthly bibliographies should be calculated to give a complete idea of the scientific, literary, and artistic movement of the country during the month; including all such indications as would be necessary, for persons interested, to be able, from whatever part of the continent they may be in, to obtain the books and other publications of which notice is given in them.

The third function of each Office, would be to provide investigators that required them, data referring to the archives and sources of historical investigation of any other kind; or the names and addresses of such persons as could give such data, and in general all that is necessary to facilitate investigation in other countries to students at home, and to put into mutual communication those who are following similar studies in different parts of the continent.

The fourth, and one of the most important missions of the Pan-American Union of National Libraries, would be the organization of an international commerce of books within the boundaries of the con-

tinent. Each one of the Central Offices of Bibliographical Information would be in close connection with the best known and most respectable booksellers of its respective country, for the effects of propagation and sale of the books sent from other American Republics, and also for the placing of reviews.

So as to give an effective guarantee to authors or editors, the control would always remain in the hands of the respective National Library, which could exercise it directly in the capital, and by means of delegates in the provinces.

All books would be sent direct from library to library. The receiving library would place them in the bookstores, would supervise the sale and collect the proceeds and unsold books. The Libraries would open a mutual current account, and all balances, after compensation, would be paid by draft, half yearly or yearly.

This plan, duly regulated and carried into effect with a practical spirit, would open up a new horizon to American intellectual production, especially in the Latin [*i.e.*, Hispanic] countries, and would place at the disposal of authors and editors a market ten or twenty times greater than that which at present is open to them. It would probably create, in Latin America, a *productive* career for men of science and men of letters.

These would be the principal tasks of the "Offices of Pan-American Bibliographical Information" and in general of the "Pan-American Union of National Libraries".

Each Office would operate in connection with its respective Library, under its immediate control and responsibility.

The National Library in each country would then be the central organ of Pan-American bibliographical information, and of inter-American circulation of literary and scientific productions.

The different National Libraries of America would then be in direct, mutual, and constant communication with each other as regards all the functions of their respective Offices of Pan-American Information, and each National Library would be at the same time in contact for the same effects, with the other libraries and with the institutions, authors, editors, and the public of its respective country.

The details of this organization would naturally be determined by international agreement.

III

The restricted proportions of a study, destined to be read in a Scientific Congress, do not allow me to enter into details regarding the project that I have sketched on general lines in the foregoing pages, in the hope that the members of this Congress will attribute it the importance which it presents to my mind.

I sincerely believe that the "Pan-American Union of National Libraries", carried out with faith and a true coöperative and fraternal spirit, organized with scrupulous care and duly fostered by the respective Governments and peoples, would be an effective and important contribution in favor of a more *American* inspiration of the intellect of the continent.

The National Library of Chile, and all its staff, would be ready to assume the responsibilities and to carry out enthusiastically the task which would fall to their lot in the realization of this idea; and I am convinced that in all sister institutions the same disposition will prevail.

In the conviction that this project is of sufficient importance to merit the vote of the Second Pan-American Scientific Congress, I permit myself to formulate the idea in the following terms—which may advantageously be modified by any of the members of the Congress:

"The Second Pan-American Scientific Congress resolves to recommend to the Governments of the countries represented in it, the creation of a 'Pan-American Bibliographical Union', constituted by the coöperative association of the National Libraries of the said countries.

"In each National Library there will be established a 'Central Bureau of Pan-American Bibliographical Information'.

"The object of these Bureaus, and of the Pan-American Bibliographical Union in general, will be to supply all the necessary means to facilitate intellectual interchange between the countries represented by them.

"The Union will perform its functions under the auspices of the respective Governments, which, by common agreement, will regulate its organization and working."

Santiago de Chile, November 1915.